Commentary

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# Chronic Kidney Disease: A Global Health Challenge with Cardiovascular Implications

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## Description

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) affects nearly 10% of the global population, with stages 4 and 5 signifying severe kidney function impairment. This population faces a heightened risk of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, with Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) emerging as the leading cause of death. Understanding and mitigating cardiovascular risks in CKD are paramount to improving outcomes. Uric acid, a byproduct of purine metabolism, is increasingly recognized as a contributor to CVD. Elevated serum uric acid levels, or hyperuricemia, exacerbate vascular health deterioration through several mechanisms: Uric acid reduces nitric oxide availability, impairing endothelial function and accelerating atherosclerosis. Hyperuricemia induces inflammatory pathways and oxidative stress, aggravating vascular damage. Uric acid activates the renin-angiotensin system, elevating blood pressure and perpetuating kidney damage. Given these effects, controlling uric acid levels in CKD patients is vital for slowing disease progression and reducing cardiovascular risks.

### Chronic kidney disease

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a degenerative condition marked by a gradual decline in kidney function over time. The kidneys are vital for preserving overall health by filtering waste, maintaining electrolyte balance and regulating blood pressure. When this function declines, it may result in severe complications, such as cardiovascular disease, anemia, bone disorders and eventually End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD), necessitating dialysis or transplantation. CKD is divided into five stages, determined by the Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) and the existence of kidney damage, like albuminuria. Early stages (1-3) frequently remain undiagnosed due to a lack of evident symptoms, while advanced stages (4-5) present more clearly with fatigue, swelling and alterations in urination. Common contributors include diabetes, hypertension, glomerulonephritis and polycystic kidney disease. Worldwide, CKD is acknowledged as a major public health issue. Its prevalence is increasing, driven by aging populations, lifestyle shifts and the mounting impact of diabetes and hypertension. As per estimates, almost 10% of the global population experiences some type of CKD, with many oblivious to their condition. The prevention and management of CKD depend on early identification and addressing changeable risk factors. Regular screening for at-risk groups, such as individuals with diabetes or hypertension, is essential. Lifestyle modifications, encompassing a nutritious diet, consistent exercise and quitting smoking, are vital in decelerating disease progression. Medical treatments, including Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (ACEIs) or Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs), are frequently utilized to manage blood pressure and lower proteinuria.

### Xanthine oxidase inhibitors

Xanthine Oxidase Inhibitors (XOIs), such as allopurinol and febuxostat, are widely used to lower serum uric acid levels. These agents work by inhibiting xanthine oxidase, the enzyme responsible for uric acid production.

**Allopurinol:** A purine-like XOI with a long history of use. Concerns include rare but severe adverse effects, such as Stevens-Johnson syndrome, particularly in individuals of Asian descent and those with renal impairment.

**Febuxostat:** A nonpurine XOI with potential cardiovascular benefits due to its anti-inflammatory, anti-fibrotic and lipid-modifying properties. Controversial cardiovascular safety profile, with some studies suggesting an increased risk of cardiovascular-related mortality compared to allopurinol. While both XOIs are effective in reducing serum uric acid levels, their differential impact on cardiovascular outcomes, particularly in advanced CKD, remains unclear. Advanced CKD patients pose unique challenges due to their susceptibility to drug-related adverse events and heightened baseline cardiovascular risk.

**Study objectives and implications:** This study aims to compare the cardiovascular outcomes of febuxostat and allopurinol in patients with advanced CKD, using a population-based cohort design.

**Efficacy:** Determining which XOI is more effective in reducing cardiovascular events in this high-risk group.

**Safety:** Assessing the incidence of adverse events, particularly those associated with long-term use of febuxostat and allopurinol.

## Conclusion

Given the intricate interplay between uric acid metabolism, cardiovascular health and CKD progression, selecting the optimal therapeutic strategy is critical. This study addresses a significant knowledge gap in the comparative cardiovascular outcomes of febuxostat and allopurinol in advanced CKD, offering valuable evidence to guide clinical decision-making and improve patient outcomes.